A 1488. b 21 (6)

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE

STORY

OF

DIVES and LAZARUS,

RECORDED BY

ST. *LUKE*, Chap. xvi. V. 19.

By the Rev. EDWARD SMYTH.

What ſhall it profit a man, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? Mark viii. 36. *Wo unto you that are rich; for, ye have received your conſolation——Wo unto you that are full; for, ye ſhall hunger——Wo unto you that laugh now; for, ye ſhall mourn, and weep.* Luke vi. 24, 25.——*Hath not GOD choſen the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the kingdom which he hath promiſed to them that love him: But ye have deſpiſed the poor.* James ii. 5, 6. *Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for your miſeries that ſhall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten——Your gold and ſilver is canhered; and the ruſt of them ſhall be a witneſs againſt you, and ſhall eat your fleſh, as it were fire: Ye have heaped treaſure together for the laſt days.* James v. 1, 2, 3.

B A T H:

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PARAPHRASE, &c.

GOD's favour we should never eliminate.

By what beha[illegible] disarming fate.

On the unjust, as [illegible] rain—

Good lends his rain—[illegible] sequence, we must

Tax his divine appointments [illegible]

The less than other men would [illegible]

Signs [illegible] prove a most defying [illegible]

And are attended with corroding [illegible]

Therefore, the poor, yet [illegible]

Why should we envy princes of the earth?

Unclean to a never-fading [illegible]

[illegible]ions of GOD, why should we not look down

A

PARAPHRASE, &c.

GOD's favour we ſhould never eſtimate
By what befals us in this changing ſtate.
On the unjuſt, as well as on the juſt,
God ſends his rain—of conſequence, we muſt
With his divine appointments acquieſce,
Tho' leſs than other men we ſhould poſſeſs,
Riches oft' prove a moſt deluſive ſnare,
And are attended with corroding care:
Therefore, tho' poor, yet if of heav'nly birth,
Why ſhould we envy princes of the earth?
Entitled to a never-fading crown,
As ſons of GOD, why ſhould we not look down

On all the pride of life with cold diſdain,
Knowing we ſoon as kings and prieſts ſhall reign?
Then, fret not, *Chriſtians*, tho' the wicked here
In grandeur and magnificence appear:
After a few revolving ſuns go round,
They and their places will no more be found—
Like fleeting dreams, and viſions of the night,
They quickly vaniſh out of human ſight.
What then will all their riches ſignify,
When in the grave their putrid corpſes lie?

'Tis true, faith's apt to ſtagger, when we ſee
Th' ungodly living in proſperity:
Sometimes perplexing reas'nings tear the breaſt,
When Vice abounds, and Virtue is diſtreſt:
But, if we keep our latter end in view,
The thoughts of heav'n each murmur will ſubdue.
When our hope's full of immortality,
And we, by faith, the promis'd reſt can ſee,

Oh what a welcome meſſenger is death!
With heart-felt joy we can reſign our breath.
For, when that kind deliverer ſhall come,
To call us to our heav'nly Father's home,
We ne'er ſhall have occaſion to complain
Of pining ſickneſs, poverty, or pain:
All our calamities will then be o'er,
And ſighs, and groans, and tears will be no more—
While thoſe who liv'd in pleaſure in the world,
Into hell's burning fiery furnace hurl'd,
Shall pierce th' infernal regions with their cries,
And feel that gnawing worm which never dies.

To prove this puniſhment, and this reward,
The foll'wing tale was left us by our LORD.

Indulging ev'ry beſtial appetite,
In creature comforts placing his delight,
A certain rich man liv'd—his opulence
Enabled him to gratify each ſenſe; And

And, therefore, to his paſſions giving way,
He far'd moſt ſumptuouſly ev'ry day.
His pamper'd, vitiated taſte to pleaſe,
For food he ranſack'd both earth, air, and ſeas.
All that his warmeſt wiſhes could deſire,
He purchas'd for himſelf—In rich attire,
In purple and fine linen he was deckt,
And look'd for ſervile homage and reſpect.

While thus in luxury he ſpent his days,
And ſaid within himſelf, " Soul, take thine eaſe,
" Eat, drink, be merry, and enjoy thy ſtate,"
A beggar was laid down before his gate.
In his pale viſage hunger was pourtray'd,
And on his vitals a diſorder prey'd.
The tatter'd rags which he was us'd to wear,
Could not preſerve him from th' inclement air:
His body with foul ulcers cover'd o'er,
The dogs came round him licking ev'ry ſore.

Reduc'd almoſt to death, for want of bread,
With falt'ring voice, with piteous groans, he ſaid,
" Have mercy on the naked, hungry poor,
" Give me the crumbs that fall upon the floor."
The votary of pleaſure and exceſs
Turn'd from the plaintive voice of wretchedneſs.
Unheeded the poor ſtarving lazar lay—
Nature, exhauſted with a long decay,
Could not hold out—fainting, convuls'd, he ſigh'd
And ſaying, " LORD, receive my ſoul," he died.

Over his corpſe none dropp'd a tender tear—
No weeping friend accompanied his bier:
Into ſome hole as a dead dog is thrown,
So was his body—No ſepulchral ſtone
Shew'd where this holy man of GOD was laid—
But honours greater far by heav'n were paid.
For, lo! a company of angels bright
Convey'd his ſpirit to the realms of light,

Where

Where now he dwells in unmoleſted reſt,
For ever lodg'd in faithful Abr'ham's breaſt.

In ſome time after, an acute diſeaſe
Seiz'd the rich man, and then his former ways,
To his remembrance brought, alarm'd his fears,
And drew forth floods of penitential tears.
Struck with remorſe, and with keen anguiſh torn,
His wretched ſtate he thus began to mourn.
" Fool that I was! the acceptable day,
" Wherein I might have wrought, is ſlipp'd away:
" The night has come upon me by ſurprize,
" Wherein no man can work—Too late I'm wiſe.
" Inſtead of pleaſing my own carnal mind,
" My riches to the halt, the maim'd, the blind,
" It was my bounden duty to diſpenſe;
" For, as the Almoner of Providence,
" I was intruſted with them—Wo is me!
" For GOD now laughs at my calamity.

" Becauſe

" Becauſe he call'd, and I refus'd to hear,
" He mocks me now, when overwhelm'd with fear.
" Too long, alas! I have deſpis'd his grace—
" Mercies abus'd my puniſhment increaſe.
" My day of trial's paſt—my hopes are o'er—
" Tis now in vain his mercy to implore:
" Soon I ſhall get the wages of my ſin—
" Hell from beneath is mov'd to take me in,"

Thus did he fearfully anticipate
Th' approaching horrors of a future ſtate.
Many phyſicians exercis'd their art,
To turn aſide ſtern death's unerring dart:
But the diſorder baffled all their care—
He groan'd, he ſhriek'd, he look'd with wild deſpair;
Nor friends, nor wealth, nor medicines could ſave,
He fell a victim to the yawning grave.

His ſervants, wife, and children round his bed
Wringing their hands, the tears of ſorrow ſhed.

In all the ſplendid pageantry of ſtate
He lay, attended by the rich and great?
Tho' unaffected with the diſmal ſcene,
Yet complaiſance conſtrain'd them grief to feign.
The coſtly coffin, in a ſable hearſe,
With hired mourners, added to the farce:
That body fed with ſuch luxurious care,
Became to creeping worms delicious fare.
His flatt'ring friends, to eternize his name,
And to tranſmit to future times his fame,
Rais'd o'er his corpſe a marble monument,
Which falſly told how well his life was ſpent—
How liberal he was to all the poor,
Who never were ſent empty from his door.
There lies his body, number'd with the dead—
But, where is his immortal ſpirit fled?
When ſever'd from its tenement of clay,
By curſed fiends 'twas ſeiz'd as lawful prey:
With grins of joy they fled with it to hell,
Where in eternal torments it muſt dwell.

Alas

Alas, alas! how alter'd is the ſcene!
He that lov'd pleaſure lives in endleſs pain—
He that could ſing the Bacchanalian ſong,
To an attentive and admiring throng,
And fill with merry catches his wide court,
Affords to devils now a diff'rent ſport.
How does he gnaſh his teeth with fell deſpair!
What wailing notes ſound thro' th' infernal air!

When to that place of torment firſt convey'd,
Poor Lazarus, in Abrah'ms boſom laid,
He ſaw aſtoniſh'd—Then with piercing cries,
He ſaid, "'Tis true, indeed, I did deſpiſe
" The beggar that now reſts in thy embrace,
" O Father Abraham—His diſmal caſe
" I had no pity for, but e'en refus'd
" The crumbs that fell down from the bread I us'd.
" Yet (if it is not now too late to pray)
" Have mercy, and ſend Lazarus away

" That, with his finger dipt in water, he
" May cool my tongue, for I'm in miſery."

With ſharp upbraidings Abraham replied,
" In hell, my ſon, all prayers are denied;
" You once, like Laz'rus, had a day of grace,
" To mind the things belonging to your peace.
" Why did you not th' allotted time improve,
" And your affections ſet on things above?
" Inſtead of loving GOD with all your heart,
" And lab'ring for your never-dying part,
" In worldly joys you plac'd your happineſs—
" In eating, drinking, cards, plays, balls, and dreſs.
" Your proſtituted bleſſings call to mind—
" Where are they now? You've left them all behind—
" The ſad reflection muſt enhance your woes,
" And conſcience make you feel it's pungent throes.
" Plac'd upon earth probationer for heav'n,
" Had you all diligence but wiſely giv'n,

" To

" To make your calling and election ſure,
" You would not now theſe poignant pangs endure.
" Poor Laz'rus knew, that when the *Chriſtian* dies
" He lives with GOD, who, from his guſhing eyes,
" The mourning drops will kindly wipe away,
" And grief's long night will turn to joyous day.
" Therefore, in patience he poſſeſs'd his ſoul,
" And, chearful, ran towards the heavn'ly goal:
" With ſtedfaſt faith he learn'd his croſs to bear,
" Aſſur'd a crown of glory he ſhould wear.
" Submiſſively dependant on his LORD,
" He now has enter'd into his reward:
" He's landed ſafe upon the peaceful ſhore,
" Where ſtreams of pleaſure flow for evermore.
" His ſtate and yours are now unchangeable,
" And a great gulf is fix'd 'tween heav'n and hell;
" So that he cannot paſs to you from hence,
" The ſmalleſt kind of favour to diſpenſe:

" Nor

" Nor can you come to him—'Tis God's decree—
" There you muſt ſuffer thro' eternity:
" No gleam of hope, no proſpect of relief,
" Remains to mitigate your ceaſeleſs grief."

His brethren, then, whom he had left on earth,
Madly rejoicing in the houſe of mirth,
Diſturb'd his mind—for thus he thought within—
" I have been acceſſary to their ſin—
" By my advice and ill example led,
" They've drawn down curſes on their guilty head;
" And, when adjudg'd to endleſs miſery,
" Their ſoul's damnation they will lay on me.
" Oh how can I their cutting cenſures bear!
" This, this will make my ſuff'rings more ſevere."

Thus muſing, Abrah'm he again addreſs'd—
" If for myſelf I can attain no reſt,

" Ye

" Yet I beſeech thee to my brethren ſend
" Laz'rus, to warn them of their dreadful end;
" That they may ſeek the LORD, and mercy find,
" Before to flaming fire they are conſign'd."
But Abrah'm ſaid—" They are without excuſe—
" The word of GOD is written for their uſe;
" There precept is on precept, line on line,
" The manifeſto of the will divine:
" Let them to Revelation's voice attend,
" And then deſtruction will not be their end."

Dives once more replied—" Tho' they may lay
" No ſtreſs on what the ſacred penmen ſay,
" Yet if from heav'n a happy ſaint was ſent,
" Convinc'd by him, they ſurely would repent:
" With the ſtrange apparition terrified,
" Then for a future ſtate they would provide."

" Vain is the thought; (ſaid Abrah'm) if they
" Refuſe GOD's holy prophets to obey,

" And will not fear the threatnings they record,
" But obſtinately ſin againſt the LORD,
" They would not be perſuaded, tho' one roſe
" Out of his grave, their danger to diſcloſe:
" From all deluſion holy writ is free—
" No ghoſt can ſpeak with greater certainty."

FINIS.